

REMARKS

Claims 36-37 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Fillipi et al in view of admitted prior art and claim 38 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Fillipi et al in view of Bankert et al and Nygren. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections for the following reasons.

In Fillipi, a solvent is used for cleaning the oxygen lines, such as a fluorocarbon solvent (see col. 2, lines 29-47). On the other hand, in the present invention, according to independent claim 36, the cleaner that is used is a silicated alkaline cleaning medium. Although Applicant discloses that the cleaner is commercially available, none of the art of record shows that the cleaner has been used as an oxygen line cleaner in a method that includes driving a pump to circulate the silicated alkaline cleaner from a reservoir through an oxygen line to be cleaned, through a filter and back to a reservoir.

In order to find that it would be obvious to modify a reference under 35 U.S.C. § 103, there must be something in the art that is relied upon for suggesting the proposed modification. Here, the proposed modification requires replacing a fluorocarbon solvent with a silicated alkaline cleaning medium. However, when the Fillipi et al reference is

considered in its entirety, one having ordinary skill in the art would be taught that aqueous solvents are unsatisfactory because they are difficult to remove completely and residual water may freeze and create a dangerous buildup of pressure (col. 1, lines 34-39) as compared to fluorocarbon solvents. Further, the reference teaches that cleaning compositions for cleaning oxygen lines "should be non-aqueous" (col. 1, lines 46-48). One having ordinary skill in the art, therefore, would not consider replacing the fluorocarbon solvents disclosed by Fillipi et al with the silicated alkaline cleaner disclosed by Applicant, which is an aqueous cleaner. That is, Fillipi et al teach away from the proposed modification set forth in the Office Action.

As set forth in claim 37, the oxygen line being cleaned with the silicated alkaline cleaner is claimed as being rinsed with a rinse medium. The rinse medium is disclosed in the specification as preferably being distilled water. See page 9, line 5 of the specification of the present application. New claim 39 has been added to specifically set forth that the rinse medium is distilled water.

On the other hand, in Fillipi et al, no aqueous solution is used in the cleaning or rinsing process. Rather, the fluorocarbon solvent is used to clean and rinse the line, and then the solvent is removed by blowing the line out with air.

Further removal of the solvent is achieved by applying a vacuum to the line and passing hot dry air through the line. The cleaning process is completed when the residual solvent vapor is determined to be below an allowable level. See col. 2, lines 5-21 of the reference, for example. Accordingly, the use of a silicated alkaline cleaning medium and an aqueous rinse medium, including distilled water, is not suggested by the reference and, therefore, claims 36, 37 and 39 are not obvious over Fillipi et al in view of the admitted prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

With respect to claim 38, the Office Action relies upon Nygren et al and Bankert et al to meet the limitation in the claim of an air operated pump. However, neither reference discloses or suggests the modification to Fillipi proposed in the Office Action with respect to replacing the solvent cleaner disclosed in the reference with a silicated alkaline cleaning medium as claimed by Applicant. Accordingly, the claimed combination of claim 38 is patentable over the combination of over Fillipi et al in view of admitted prior art, Nygren et al and Bankert et al. Accordingly, the 35 U.S.C. § 103 rejection of this claim should be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks,
reconsideration and reexamination are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John R. Mattingly", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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